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# PRUDENCE SAYS SO

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### CHAPTER XII.

#### The Connie Problem.

Mr. Starr was getting ready to go to conference, and the girls hovered about him with anxious eyes. This was their fifth conference since coming to Mount Mark—the time limit for Methodist ministers was five years. The Starrs, therefore, would be transferred, and where? Small wonder that the girls followed him around the house and spoke in soft voices and looked with tender eyes at the old parsonage and the wide lawn. They would be leaving next week. Already the curtains were down, and laundered, and packed. The trunks were filled, the books were boxed. Yes, they were leaving, but whither were they bound?

"Get your ecclesiastical dander up, father," Carol urged, "don't let them give us a church fight, or a twenty-thousand-dollar debt on a thousand-dollar congregation."

"We don't care for a big salary or a stylish congregation," Lark added, "but we don't want to go back to washpans and kerosene lamps again."

The conference was held in Fairfield, and he informed the girls casually that he would be home on the first train after the assignments were made. He said it casually, for he did not wish them to know how perturbed he was over the coming change. During the conference he tried in many and devious ways to learn the will of the authorities regarding his future, but he found no clue. And at home the girls were discussing the matter very little, but thinking of nothing else. They were determined to be pleased about it.

Just the same, on Wednesday evening, the girls sat silent, with intensely flushed faces and painfully shining eyes, watching the clock, listening for the footstep. They had deliberately remained away from the station. They thought they could face it better within the friendly walls of the parsonage. It was all settled now, father knew where they were going. Oh, why hadn't he wired? It must be terribly bad then, he evidently wanted to break it to them gently.

Maybe it was a circuit! There was the whistle now! Only a few minutes now. Suppose his salary were cut down—good-by to silk stockings and kid gloves—cheap, but kid, just the same! Suppose the parsonage would be old-fashioned! Suppose there wasn't any parsonage at all, and they would have to pay rent! Sup— Then the door slammed.

Carol and Lark picked up their darning, and Connie bent earnestly over her magazine. Aunt Grace covered a yawn with her slender fingers and looked out of the window.

"Hello!"

"Why, hello, papa! Back already?"

They dropped darning and magazine and flew to welcome him home.

"Come and sit down!" "My, it seemed a long time!" "We had lots of fun, father." "Was it a nice conference?" "Mr. James sent us two bushels of potatoes!" "We're going to have chicken tomorrow—the Ladies' Aiders sent it with their farewell love." "Wasn't it a dandy day?"

"Well, it's all settled."

"Yes, we supposed it would be. Was the conference good? We read accounts of it every day, and acted stuck-up when it said nice things about you."

"We are to—"

"Ju-just a minute, fatner," interrupted Connie anxiously. "We don't care a snap where it is, honestly we don't. We're just crazy about it, wherever it is. We've got it all settled. You needn't be afraid to tell us."

"Afraid to tell us!" mocked the twins indignantly. "What kind of slave-drivers do you think we are?"

"Father knows we're all right. Go on, daddy, who's to be our next flock?"

"We haven't any, we——"

The girls' faces paled. "Haven't any? You mean—"

"I mean we're to stay in Mount Mark."

"Stay in— What?"

"Mount Mark. They—"

"They extended the limit," cried Connie, springing up.

"No," he denied, laughing. "They made me a presiding elder, and we're—"

"A presiding elder! Father! Honestly? They—"

"They ought to have made you a bishop," cried Carol loyally. "I've been expecting it all my life. That's where the next jump'll land you."

"I pity the next parsonage bunch, said Connie sympathetically.

"Why? There's nothing the matter with our church!"

"Oh, no, that isn't what I mean. But the next minister's family can't possibly come up to us, and so—"

The others broke her sentence with their laughter.

"Talk about me and my complexion!" gasped Carol, wiping her eyes. "I'm nothing to Connie and her family pride. Where will we live now, father?"

"We'll rent a house—any house we like."

"Rent! Mercy, father, doesn't the conference furnish the elders with houses? We can never afford to pay rent! Never!"

"Oh, we have a salary of twenty-five hundred a year now," he said, with apparent complacence, but careful to watch closely for the effect of this statement. It gratified him, too, much as he had expected. The girls stood stock-still and gazed at him, and then, with a violent struggle for self-composure Carol asked:

"Did you get any of it in advance? I need some new slippers."

So the packing was finished, a suitable house was found—modern, with reasonable rent—on Maple avenue where the oaks were most magnificent, and the parsonage family became just ordinary "folks," a parsonage household no longer.

Mr. Starr's new position necessitated long and frequent absences from home, and that was a drawback to the family comradeship. But the girls' pride in his advancement was so colossal, and their determination to live up to the dignity of the eldership was so deep-seated, that affairs ran on quite serenely in the new home.

One day this beautiful serenity was broken in upon in a most unpleasant way. Carol looked up from "De Senectute" and flung out her arms in an all-relieving yawn. Then she looked at her aunt, asleep on the couch. She looked at Lark, who was aimlessly drawing feathers on the skeletons of birds in her biology text. She looked at Connie, sitting upright in her chair, a small book close to her face, alert, absorbed, oblivious to the world. Connie was wide awake, and Carol resented it.

"What are you reading, Con?" She asked reproachfully.

Connie looked up, startled, and colored a little. "Oh—poetry," she stammered.

Carol was surprised. "Poetry," she echoed. "Poetry? What kind of poetry?"

Connie answered evasively. "It is by an old Oriental writer. I don't suppose you've ever read it. Khayyam is his name."

"Some name," said Carol suspiciously. "What's the poem?" Her eyes had narrowed and darkened. By this time Carol had firmly convinced herself that she was bringing Connie up—a belief which afforded lively amusement to self-conducting Connie.

"Why, it's 'The Rubaiyat.' It's—"

"'The Rubaiyat!'" Carol frowned. Lark looked up from the skeletons with sudden interest. "'The Rubaiyat?' By Khayyam? Isn't that the old fellow who didn't believe in God, and heaven, and such things—you know what I mean—the man who didn't believe anything, and wrote about it? Let me see it. I've never read it myself, but I've heard about it." Carol turned the pages with critical disapproving eyes.

"I don't believe it, you know," Connie said coolly. "I'm only reading it. How can I know whether it's trash or not, unless I read it? I—"

"Ministers' daughters are supposed to keep their fingers clear of the burning ends of matches," said Carol neatly. "We can't handle them without getting scorched, or blackened, at least. Prudence says so."

"Prudence," said Connie gravely, "is a dear sweet thing, but she's awfully old-fashioned, Carol; you know that."

Carol and Lark were speechless. They would as soon have dreamed of questioning the catechism as Prudence's perfection.

"She's narrow. She's a darling, of course, but she isn't up-to-date. I want to know what folks are talking about. I don't believe this poem. I'm a Christian. But I want to know what other folks think about me and what I believe. That's all. Prudence is fine, but I know a good deal more about some things than Prudence will know when she's a thousand years old."

The twins still sat silent.

"Of course, some folks wouldn't approve of parsonage girls reading things like this. But I approve of it. I want to know why I disagree with this poetry, and I can't until I know where we disagree. It's beautiful, Carol, really. It's kind of sad. It makes me want to cry. It's—"

"I've a big notion to tell papa on you," said Carol soberly and sadly.

Connie rose at once.

"I'm going to tell papa myself."

Carol moved uneasily in her chair. "Oh, let it go this time. I—I just mentioned it to relieve my feelings. I won't tell yet. I'll talk it over with you again. I'll have to think it over first."

"I think I'd rather tell him," insisted Connie.

Carol looked worried, but she knew Connie would do as she said. So she got up nervously and went with her. She would have to see it through now, of course. Connie walked silently up the stairs, with Carol following meekly behind, and rapped at her father's door. Then she entered, and Carol, in a hushed sort of way, closed the door behind them.

"I'm reading this, father. Any objections?" Connie faced him calmly, and handed him the little book.

He examined it gravely, his brows contracting, a sudden wrinkling at the corners of his lips that might have meant laughter, or disapproval, or anything.

"I thought a parsonage girl should not read it," Carol said bravely. "I've never read it myself, but I've heard about it, and parsonage girls ought to read parsonage things. Prudence says so. But—"

"But I want to know what other folks think about what I believe," said Connie. "So I'm reading it."

"What do you think of it?" he asked quietly, and he looked very strangely at his baby daughter. It was a crisis, and he must be very careful.

"I think it is beautiful," Connie said softly, and her lips drooped a little, and a wistful pathos crept into her voice. "It seems so sad. I keep wishing I could cry about it. Part of it I don't understand very well."

He held out a hand to Connie, and she put her own in it confidently. Carol, too, came and stood close behind him.

"Yes," he said, "it is beautiful, Connie, and it is very terrible. We can't understand it fully because we can't feel what he felt. He looked thoughtfully at the girls. "He was a marvelous man, that Khayyam—years ahead of his people, and his time. He was big enough to see the idiocy of the heathen ideas of God, he was beyond them, he spurned them. But he was not quite big enough to reach out, alone, and get hold of our kind of a God. It is a wonderful poem. It shows the weakness, the helplessness of a gifted man who has nothing to cling to. I think it will do you good to read it, Connie. Read it again and again, and thank God, my child, that though you are only a girl, you have the very thing this man, this genius, was craving. We admire his talent, but we pity his weakness. You will feel sorry for him. You read it, too, Carol. You'll like it. We can't understand it, as I say, because we are so sure of our God, that we can't feel what he felt, having nothing. Of course it makes you want to cry, Connie. It is the saddest poem in the world."

Connie's eyes were very bright. She winked hard a few times, choking back the rush of tears. Then with an impulsiveness she did not often show, she lifted her father's hand and kissed it passionately.

"Oh, father," she whispered, "I was so afraid—you wouldn't quite see." She kissed his hand again.

Carol looked at her sister respectfully. "Connie," she said, "I certainly beg your pardon. I just wanted to be clever, and didn't know what I was talking about. When you have finished it, give it to me, will you? I want to read it, too; I think it must be wonderful."

She held out a slender shapely hand and Connie took it quickly, clumsily, and the two girls turned toward the door.

"The danger in reading things," said Mr. Starr, and they paused to listen, "the danger is that we may find arguments we cannot answer; we may feel that we have been in the wrong, that what we read is right. There's the danger. Whenever you find anything like that, Connie, will you bring it to me? I think I can find the answer for you. If I don't know it, I will look until I come upon it. For we have been given an answer to every argument. You'll come to me, won't you?"

"Yes, father, I will—I know you'll find the answers."

After the door had closed behind them, Mr. Starr sat for a long time staring straight before him into space.

"The Connie problem," he said at last. And then, "I'll have to be better

Mr. Starr Sat for a Long Time Staring Straight Before Him Into Space.

pals with her. Connie's going to be pretty fine, I believe."

(To be continued.)

## Tall Oaks From Little Acorns Grow


—By Courtesy of the St. Louis Star

## Cardinal Gibbons Urges Public to Acquire Habit of Thrift

Cardinal Gibbons has issued a stirring appeal to the citizens of America in the support of Thrift propaganda and War Savings plan. The appeal was written in response to Robert Crain, War Savings Director of Maryland, and was first published in the Baltimore Sun.

The appeal is as follows:

To My Fellow-Countrymen:

The door of opportunity to serve our country is flung wide open for practically every man, woman and child by the sale of war savings stamps. This is the most impressive thing about the movement which is being undertaken by the National War Savings Committee. There can be few people whose circumstances will not permit them to buy at intervals the 25-cent thrift stamp, and with each purchase gain step by step possession of the war savings stamp, for each one of which the credit and resources of the United States are pledged to return $5 for what now costs $4.12.

Such a return being produced by the process of compound interest carries the lesson of thrift in a practical and convincing way. I earnestly commend to young and old, and more particularly to parents, this simple and easy method of acquiring the habit of thrift. Many sorrows are avoided and much happiness is to be gained by the timely application of the principles of thrift. To the building of character it brings profitable acquaintance with self-denial and self-reliance. It is a valuable aid to good citizenship and a blessing that once properly grounded is a faithful companion through life.

We have reached a time in our national life when no loyal citizen of this country can afford to spend a dollar for wasteful luxuries. Such an expenditure resolves itself into a disloyal act.

Welcome indeed, therefore, is the opportunity offered through the sale of these war savings stamps to promote the cultivation of thrift and at the same time to serve one's country by lending to it in such small sums the price of the first step—the 25-cent thrift stamp.

Such is not only a privilege, but it is the clear duty of every American citizen, young and old, I urge upon our clergy and our schools to aid in every way in promoting thrift through the purchase of war savings stamps.

For the help it gives to our country's cause, for the good it will do those who take such steps, may this movement carry its patriotic and practical mission to every nook and corner of the nation.

Most faithfully yours,
(Signed) J. CARD. GIBBONS.

Baltimore, January 14, 1918.

### "Uncle Sam."

The popular term "Uncle Sam," as applied to the United States government, originated in Troy and Greenbush, N. Y., during the war of 1812-14. Elbert Anderson, Jr., one of the contractors supplying the army of the north with provisions, in October, 1812, advertised for proposals for pork and beef to be delivered to him during the first four months of the following year in New York, Troy, Albany and Waterford. Among those who contracted to furnish him with beef, packed in barrels, were Ebenezer and Samuel Wilson, the latter familiarly called by Trojans "Uncle Sam." As the beef was delivered at Greenbush barracks from time to time the Troy soldiers referred to it as "Uncle Sam's" beef. The other soldiers, not knowing who "Uncle Sam" was, thought that the term was applied to the letters U. S. stamped upon the barrels by the government officials. Consequently it was not long before the term "Uncle Sam," meaning the United States, was in common use.

### Japanese and Malays.

The Japanese hat resembles much the Malayan. So also does the Japanese umbrella. The ancient Japanese helmet was adorned with horns of animals. Similar helmets exist in the Malayan archipelago. The old-fashioned weapons of the Japanese police, used in particular for catching thieves, are still used by Malayan policemen. The custom of catching fish at night by torchlight prevails both in Japan and in the Malayan archipelago. An ordeal with boiling water, a special sort of football game, the popularity of cock fights and the custom of keeping singing insects in little cages are found both among the Japanese and Malays. All this, asserts a writer, speaks in favor of the descent of the Japanese from the Malays.

### Small Patriot's Rebuke.

The other day I answered a knock at the door and encountered a small boy, who immediately tried to sell me a choice assortment of knitting needles.

"But, sonny, I don't knit," said I, thinking to close the matter.

He looked at me reproachfully for a moment and then: "Lady, aren't you going to do anything for your country?"—Chicago Tribune.

### Far From Ideal.

"Tears, idle tears," murmured Flubdub.

"That can't possibly allude to profiteers," declared Wombat. — Louisville Courier-Journal.

## CROWING OF COCKS

### Rooster's Midnight Alarm May Be Haunt of Soldier?

#### Historical Events Are Quoted to Show Effects of Call at Regular Hours.

Is the crowing of the cock the haunt of soldiers?

Philosophers might ask themselves this question, fools might hesitate long enough with a ray of intelligence to remark, "It does look funny." The cock sounds his first shrill clarion call at twelve o'clock, midnight.

His neighboring cock from an eminent perch in an apple tree hears it and answers "auwk-er-uk-er-oo-o." Then he sleeps again and an hour later sounds the second watch of the night. He sleeps some more. He sounds the call from the barracks and his neighbors join in to make the dawning welkin ring.

Through this Eastern section, where eastern and central time changes and the country is thickly settled, there is an hour difference in the time of the midnight crowing of the cock within a few miles' ride of the traveler.

Since the war began in Europe and the nations engaged in that conflict set the clocks back an hour for military reasons, it is said that the cock has adjusted his midnight crowing to suit the hour by the clock.

Beginning two weeks before Christmas the cock crows first at ten o'clock at night and then at the regular hours as before until after Christmas eve.

When the Roman empire claimed its outposts as the outposts of civilization and its armies as legions, the watches of the night were sounded by the bugle of the sentinel from his tower stationed wherever the mighty country had laid claim to domain. It was then that the crowing of the cock seems to have become connected with the soldier's call of the watches of the night. "The cock shall not thrice crow this night before you shall deny me." It is mentioned in the Bible to denote the watches of the night.

The Christmas festivities in the early days of Christianity lasted several days, beginning prior to Christmas day and the revelries of the night, in which wines flowed freely, doubtless led to a curfew call which descended to the cock as the other watch calls of the soldier's bugle.

In the present world war when the haunt of the soldier is again world-wide, it is not unlikely that it might exert an influence on the life of the domestic animal. The horse, it is claimed by scientists, can scent the battle from afar and his nature even feels the approach of war.

Even again the time of the universal crowing of the cock might be changed by the effect of the military change of the people of the day.

## HISTORIC TOLLGATE IS GONE

### End of Landmark in the Shenandoah Valley Recalls an Interesting Civil War Story.

The razing of the Hillman tollgate house takes away a historic landmark in the lower Shenandoah valley. It was constructed in 1840, before there were railroads in this section, and it was a part of the thoroughfare from Tennessee to Alexandria, Va., and often 20 to 30 wagons could be seen in a line making the trip to and from the boats at Alexandria.

The first toll was collected at gate No. 1 by Simeon Hillman, and he continued to collect toll until his death in 1860. From 1860 to 1862 the gate was kept by his widow, Charlotte Hillman, when, on account of war conditions, the gate was abandoned until 1865. The house was struck by a shell just before the Battle of Kernstown.

It was at this gate that Charlotte Hillman held up General Sheridan and his staff. The general paid the regular toll for himself and his staff followed his example.

"But," said the general as he passed through, "I cannot vouch for my army."

When the soldiers came up Mrs. Hillman raised the pole, but stood at her post all day long and kept tally and after the war she sent the bill to Washington and it was promptly paid.

General Sheridan passed through this gate again on his famous ride from Winchester, Gen. Stonewall Jackson, in his valley campaign, frequently passed through it, always paying toll.

### Wood, 99 Cents a Cord.

Hark, yet city dwellers who pay 'steen dollars a stick for wood for the fireplace!

An auditor of the state board of accounts, returning from Brown county, reports they burn wood in the courthouse stoves down there—oak wood, which makes lots of heat and burns long. They burn wood in the face of the fact that coal is close at hand and low in price—for they buy the wood at 99 cents a cord, delivered at the courthouse.—Indianapolis News.